

**NOTES FROM TOWN HALL**  
**Town Administrator Rosemary Cashman**

**Capital Budget.** The Capital Asset Management Committee has been meeting to review and discuss capital requests from town and school departments. The town by-law requires that a capital asset cost at least \$50,000 and have a useful life of at least 5 years. The Fire Department has requested various items for the next few years, including protective gear, breathing apparatus, vehicles, and a new fire station. The Highway Department has requested the replacement of some of its aging vehicles. The Finance Department will need to upgrade its computer software by 2009 as the vendor will no longer support the DOS-based program. The School Department has requested various items, including completion of the roof replacement at the Early Childhood Center, technology upgrades, security improvements, cafeteria refurbishment at the Middle School, and window replacements. The Capital Asset Management Committee will prioritize the capital items in a written 5-year plan, and will make recommendations to the Finance Committee and Selectmen prior to the Town Meeting in May.

**Stormwater Management Plan.** The Town is in the process of preparing and implementing a stormwater management plan in accordance with state and federal requirements. The Town must comply by 2008. The purpose is to develop a stormwater management plan that will minimize the discharge of pollutants from the stormwater drainage system and that will protect water quality. Some work has already been done on this plan. Work to be completed includes: 1) map the catch basins, stormwater outfalls, and receiving waters using a global positioning system and geographic information system; 2) stencil the catch basins; 3) work with the Planning Board and others to revise zoning by-laws and regulations; 4) obtain approval from town meeting for revised by-laws; 5) develop a written stormwater management plan.

**Housing Study.** The Town will be updating its housing information during the next several months. A previous study was completed in 1998. The Town will be working with the regional planning agency, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG). Items to be reviewed include: population projections, school enrollment projections, economic trends, zoning and build-out projections, housing market, and affordable housing needs.

**Town Center.** The Town has recently been awarded a state grant to work on the creation of a Town Center, including recommendations for zoning changes and design guidelines. The Town's Master Plan and Economic Development Plan recommend the development of a Town Center. This area encompasses Middlesex Road from Bryants Lane to Westford Road. It is expected that this study will be completed by the end of the year. This study is only one step in the process. Any construction and improvements in the Town Center would need to be discussed and possibly implemented in the years ahead. Some of the goals for a Town Center are: 1) develop a Town Common where citizens can congregate for town events and other activities; 2) provide sidewalks; 3) promote the use of 3 existing town-owned buildings that are currently vacant (Winslow School, Littlefield Library, Old Town Hall); 4) encourage economic development and job creation; and 5) assist in the protection and/or re-use of historic buildings and resources.